

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

GOOD NEIGHBOR ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD
2002 Strategic Planning Session

Omni Shoreham Hotel
Washington, DC
January 23-24, 2002

Detailed Meeting Summary

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

GOOD NEIGHBOR ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD

2002 Strategic Planning Session

Omni Shoreham Hotel

Washington, DC

January 23-24, 2002

Detailed Meeting Summary

Participants

Chair

Judith M. Espinosa

Sarah Sowell (on behalf of Gregg
Cooke)

Rosendo Trevino III

Richard Walling

**Non-Governmental, State,
Local, Tribal Members**

Larry Allen

Diana Borja

Karen M. Chapman

Gedi Cibas, Ph.D.

Irasema Coronado, Ph.D.

Placido dos Santos

William G. Fry

Jennifer L. Kraus

Susan Kunz

Jerry Paz

Dale Phillips

Ed Ranger

Diane Rose

Nancy H. Sutley

Federal Members

John Klein

Dennis Linskey

EPA Support Team

Elaine M. Koerner

Geraldine Brown

Lois Williams

Resource Specialist

Roberto Ybarra

Guests

January 23, 2002

Andrea Abel

James Compos

Ginny Gidi

Bob Hardaker

Betsy Henry

Ricardo Paneta Elbaran (phonetic)

Detailed Meeting Summary

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

GOOD NEIGHBOR ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD

2002 Strategic Planning Session

Omni Shoreham Hotel

Washington, DC

January 23-24, 2002

January 23, 2002

Welcome and Introductions—Chairperson Espinosa

The session began at 8:40 a.m. Chairperson Espinosa welcomed everyone, and mentioned the exciting agenda for January 24. She thanked Elaine Koerner for putting together the new board member orientation, and mentioned that she hoped the orientations would become standard practice. Chairperson Espinosa introduced several observers: former Board member, Bob Hardaker, Andrea Abel, with the National Wildlife Federation Office (attending as a representative of the National Advisory Committee to the Administrator), and Ginny Gidi, with the Office of International Refugee Health. Board members introduced themselves.

Chairperson Espinosa mentioned the previous day's press conference to discuss the Fifth Report, and noted that newspapers from Mexico City (Notimex), San Diego, and Copley News Service had reporters there. She urged Board members to return home with copies of the press advisory for their local media outlets, and stated that she hoped they would hold press conferences this year.

Chairperson Espinosa announced that she will be staying on the Board, but will be resigning as Chair, following this meeting. EPA's Administrator is considering whom to appoint as Chair. Ms. Espinosa thanked the Board members, and Ms. Koerner for their support over the years.

Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections or modifications to the minutes of the last meeting. A motion was made, and seconded, to accept the minutes as written, and the Board agreed unanimously.

Planning Session Goals/Outcomes

Ms. Koerner suggested that the Board focus on the goals and outcomes for the planning session, and its products, and the Sixth Report, and its themes (which will start with the Calxico meeting), specifically highlighting what worked well in the past year, and suggesting improvements for the coming year. Chairperson Espinosa suggested discussing the meetings, and interaction with the speakers, and especially the public. Members suggested that upcoming meetings could focus on particular themes, resulting from the speakers' and public's recommendations, and suggestions for activities.

Board Discussions included:

- Some approval of the thematic approach, which would bring a focus to each meeting. Themes would be chosen based on what is happening in the regions. Speakers would provide a broad range of views, and there would be greater public participation. Although the Board has struggled to be responsive to the public comments, it was suggested that the leading outcomes should be incorporated into the Report to the President, and to Congress, to provide a conduit, and liaison on behalf of the community. More effort could be made to have speakers that are directly related to the outgoing Report.
- As a result of putting out a press advisory, the local media (including the Mexican press) are more likely to attend. It was urged that the Board do that for any kind of meeting they have.
- The Board has become one of four recognized venues for public comment to EPA on reforms for the BECC and the NADBank. Not only are the opinions of the Board members sought, but the Board is used as a conduit to seek public comment, and the EPA is better able to disseminate information. Further, the Board has been useful as a forum for government representatives to present the federal viewpoint, and reduce the gap between the border region, and Washington.
- Attention should be paid to public stakeholder groups. NGOs should be contacted, and a database should be begun to give them notices of meetings, and to create a network.
- Site visits in the community are beneficial, with perhaps public input at some of the sites.
- Writing more letters proactively, especially between meetings, keeps the Board visible and penetrating different levels in order to influence them. A consensus email vote is possible if issues arise between meetings.
- The reception of the Board's initial outreach to other organizations has been positive. One area to improve is the relationships with these organizations, which could leverage the power and scope of their memberships to have

more influence with decisionmakers at all levels. A suggestion was made to have a liaison in between meetings to some of these groups, including the tribes, chambers of commerce, and border groups.

- It was suggested that meetings should be held, occasionally, on campuses to access the academic community. Efforts should be made to invite district Congressional staff to the Board's meetings. The Board should reach out to the 14 U.S.-Mexico Resource Conservation and Development Coalitions—the Board is urban-biased, and these coalitions, and other organizations, reach into the lower levels of government.
- An evaluative component should be continuously incorporated in the Board's activities.
- The Board should provide feedback to those who have made public comments to let them know that something has been done about their concerns. These comments could be sent to the appropriate agency.

Ms. Koerner asked for feedback on the effectiveness of the communications tools used between meetings. A suggestion was made to schedule meetings, and calls using Microsoft Outlook, which would put the activity directly on the Board members' calendars. Ms. Koerner, and others mentioned some of the challenges to implementing that idea, but she agreed to push for it. A Board member pointed out that many federal agency e-mails have firewalls that would prohibit the information from being put on their calendars.

A suggestion was made to have Board members forward the Round-Up to the pertinent listservs that they are on, and to others who might be interested. There also should be regular contact with the Congressional offices.

Ms. Koerner proposed a single conference call to occur in March.

Review of Last Year—Elaine Koener

Ms. Koerner asked for Board feedback on the process of reporting to the President, and the Executive Branch. Chairperson Espinosa pointed out that in the aftermath of September 11, it is going to be even more of a challenge to keep border issues a high priority with the Administration. A Board member thought that the frequency of contact (beyond the annual report) has improved, and that the Board should be involved in more issues like BECC, and NADBank reform. Another said that the letters sent on those issues were very effective. A thank you went to the Board for its willingness to spend time on short notice on these issues, and a comment was made that there may be other intensive efforts in the future. A

member liked the idea of brief communications that are single-subject.

It was suggested that each Board member make a commitment to speak to a local community group, at least once, in order to help increase the visibility of the Board, and make the border more of an issue. Another priority should be to improve the working relationship with the Consejo.

There were no comments on things done in the previous year that should be dropped.

Ms. Koerner said that one of her goals for the year is to receive a written response to the Board's Report. There is a lot of interest in the Administration and with Administrator Whitman, and her staff on the Report. A member asked if the Board had received comments from Members of Congress, or their staffs, on the Report. Ms. Koerner responded that the Board is primarily an Executive Branch committee. As soon as the last Report was released, it was distributed to some key Executive Branch offices, and some Board members will be taking it to the Hill. Chairperson Espinosa said that some Board members send the Report to their Congressional delegations and receive letters back from them that probably should be disseminated to the Board.

Development of 2002 Roadmap

Chairperson Espinosa asked Board members to examine the 2002 Roadmap to ensure that no changes needed to be made to its vision. The Board had discussed the 2002 vision previously, but no consensus had been reached. Chairperson Espinosa wanted to have a consensus on the issues, key activities, and goals—while keeping in mind the Sixth Report and the improvements for the next year just discussed.

The vision in the 2001 Roadmap was reviewed: to be seen as a voice for border region communities; to be viewed by media as a credible source; to maintain high-level, formalized communication with the Executive Branch, Congress, and border groups; and to maintain active communication with Mexican border groups. The Chairperson suggested separating out the border groups from the Executive Branch and Congress to have this activity stand out more. Mr. Walling pointed out that most of the 2001 vision dealt with communicating with various levels of stakeholders. He wondered if there are other broader concepts that need to be included. Several Board members thought that communication is a primary function, along with making specific recommendations about what they are hearing

from their communities. What is unique about the GNEB is that it is the only formal mechanism that exists within the federal government to provide advice from border communities.

A Board member suggested having a component about learning and seeking the truth from their constituencies and communicating that. Mr. Ranger commented that he had felt discomfort at the previous day's news conference when a question was asked about the impact of the Board's recommendations to the President and Congress. He didn't really have a response. This became a theme throughout the morning's discussion. Mr. Ranger proposed that a goal should be to maintain the high-level, formalized relationships and communicate with the President and Congress, to hold them accountable, to continuously evaluate the impact of the Board's activities, and to communicate the results of the Board's recommendations back to the border communities. After some discussion he went on to ask how the Board could evaluate the achievements or neglect by the decisionmakers and then communicate that to the Board's constituents along the border. Several evaluation methods were discussed.

A Board member pointed to the recent disparity between the Clinton and Bush Administrations with which the Board has dealt—that there is a completely different way of looking at environmental issues now. He sees an opportunity through these recommendations to help mold and influence the thinking of Administration officials. Another stated that in some government agencies the Board is going to find more resistance to change than in others, and that has to be factored in when evaluating performance. Sometimes the Board will have to fight harder to make its points known. Based on this discussion, Ms. Koerner and Chairperson Espinosa will recast the vision, goals, and activities into a draft for tomorrow.

Mr. Allen thought that the different perceptions in the rural areas and in the cities presents an opportunity to listen—for example, with the RC&Ds. The Board also has the opportunity to facilitate discussion between the federal government and the states.

Mr. Hardaker recalled that the Board had gone with the Third Report to all of the relevant federal and state agencies with a compilation of about 175 recommendations. They got back information on what had been accomplished, the impact, and the progress that had occurred since the recommendations were made. He suggested that the Board do this again, perhaps as an appendix to a report. The place where implementation really hasn't occurred is in the legislative arena. Maybe

there are alternatives to legislative action that should be considered. Chairperson Espinosa said that perhaps that could be a work product for this year. The Board has gotten good feedback on the Fourth Report on watershed.

Ms. Sutley suggested self-evaluation—sometimes getting a federal agency to focus on something they hadn't before is progress. This Board is a unique voice and national policy is set very far from the border. The Board has the charge to come back to the federal government with what is being said in border communities—the concerns there are different from other parts of the country. Ms. Chapman agreed that bringing the concerns of the border back to the federal government should be a primary objective of the Board. The fact that the Board's concerns are not necessarily in line with current government policies should not limit what is said.

Mr. Trevino stated that one part of the vision might be homeland security and how the communities and producers along the border, and federal and state agencies, are involved in addressing the issue. How are they impacted? Site visits or public forums might be appropriate. Board members comments on homeland security included:

- The federal government has a higher level of interest in homeland security issues and some border issues might be couched in those terms. Perhaps working with the Administration should not be viewed as toeing the party line, but as an opportunity to identify areas where interests overlap.
- The Board should resist the temptation to cast everything in terms of homeland security (for example, border power plants).
- The security focus will be moving now from the Canadian to the Mexican border. The government wants to develop a 30-point security plan that will probably have environmental consequences unpopular with people on the Mexican border—such as enforcing the Database Management Information Act (which requires people leaving the United States to undergo border checks). As long as homeland security is an issue, it is going to cause a lot of environmental problems for the border communities (such as long wait times at U.S. border exits).
- The border cities are losing sales tax revenue because of increased border security, and that impacts the ability of local government to provide services. There needs to be a balance between security and commerce. Now security impedes Mexicans from spending money and people are losing their jobs because of the poor economy. Unemployment can be perceived as a security issue. Technology can be used to facilitate the movement of people at the border. There is a need to fight smarter and harder to raise these issues at all

- levels of government.
- Chairperson Espinosa asked if homeland security and issues of energy, agriculture, or transportation and air pollution are what the Board should address this year.
 - There seems to be a link between homeland security and environmental infrastructure and its implementation, which would be in keeping with the Board's mission. It could become contextual information in the report, a comment letter, or a short white paper.
 - This is a complex issue that is not going to result in a quick white paper. Perhaps the Board should look at how well the border is prepared to handle environmental issues that may come up because of security concerns or bioterrorism. The Board might need to make recommendations to the local or federal agencies that have jurisdiction.
 - Other groups (the Board of Governors Conference and the Border Trade Alliance) are working on this issue and they reflect the views of the border. The BGC is looking at the societal and economic impacts to the border region of the new security requirements.
 - It would be easy to get overstretched on the security issue. Since other groups are working on it, maybe a single paragraph in a report or a one-page comment letter would be more appropriate than getting too directly involved.
 - The framework developed in 2001 is applicable to the vision, activities, and goals of 2002.
 - It is tempting to get involved in homeland security but the Board should give it a low priority, and factor it into other issues. The Board will not be heard by the Administration if it recommends decreasing security because the security is harming the environment.
 - Local solutions are important, and there are national policies that can interfere with local solutions. However, a solution in one location may be applicable in another location. Because the Board is such a diverse group it has a unique opportunity to help point the way for some federal policies (like homeland security), but with suggestions for mitigating actions. Perhaps a portion of each Board meeting should be dedicated to sharing local problems and models—that is, what is being done locally by people who have an influence on the quality of the environment at their locale. This would allow the Board to make recommendations for local issues, which it hasn't done before. The Board has been making recommendations on coast-to-coast issues, but this would allow it to move from a border-wide perspective down to the local level.

- Examples like air pollution from car exhausts in line at border crossings that precipitate asthma attacks really do occur, they are not just discussion points.
- Doing a comment letter that touches on homeland security in the context of actual issues faced by border communities is a good idea. The elements of a comment letter are in this discussion.
- No matter what is going on in DC, the needs of the border should not get side-tracked into security issues. Border issues should be presented and then examined in the context of homeland security.
- The NAC and GAC advise the Administrator in a two-fold way. They receive lists of questions to consider from EPA. They advise EPA on these issues and also on issues in their own agenda. They send formal advice letters to the Administrator on the questions and also on other issues that arise.
- The Board shouldn't underestimate the impact of its advice. It is timely, it slows down the policy discussions, and the Board's viewpoint modifies policy.
- It is very timely to tie into the academic world now as there are several research projects on border issues. That world brings a different perspective.

Chairperson Espinosa thanked the Board for its comments and reiterated that she and Ms. Koerner would be rewriting the vision statement for discussion later.

Roundtable: Integration of GNEB's Border Meetings (New Approach for Sixth Report)

Chairperson Espinosa stated that in 2001 the Board discussed taking a new approach with the Report because of the many different topics addressed and the difficult, time-consuming writing. The one-topic issue (similar to the watershed report) is being considered. It would promote greater use of public comments in the Board's recommendations, and help to structure the themes of meetings. The proposed Report would be similar to a corporate annual report, discussing the year's activities, the recommendations that come out of each meeting, and the comments from the public. In addition to the themes focusing the recommendations, each meeting would generate interim activities and provide general guidelines for letters, papers, and advice. It was unclear to Chairperson Espinosa if there is a formal consensus on this.

In conjunction with the three meetings (including this one) and community meetings along the border, each will have a theme. Speakers are being lined up and ideas

generated for the meetings, with the hope that recommendations and comments will flow out of them. Ms. Koerner said that there has been a disconnect in the past between all of the input, briefings by the speakers, and comments that never make it into the Report. This revamping is an attempt to integrate the meetings, ideas, and Report, and come up with a limited number of recommendations. She suggested a draft outline of how a Report might be structured, which would also help frame the thinking about the components of each meeting and Report. Some of the members had been discussing the issue the previous night and thought that three sections would be good—a report of what the locals are saying, the more macro issues on the border, and the timely/hot-ticket items.

Additional comments included a question on how the issues are being identified for the meetings. A suggestion was made that the communities be solicited for their input on issues, and there was discussion of having both a macro/border-wide focus and also integrating local issues. The next meeting in Calexico and how its themes and speakers are being developed was discussed. A member said that focusing on a few issues rather than trying to describe the many issues on the border is particularly useful for the recipients of the Board's recommendations. The recommendations would be strengthened by reflecting the public comments—this is an area on which the Board has not done well (for example, with used tire disposal).

Ms. Koerner went through the proposed outline of the next Report. She said that she would like much of the Report written as they go through the year. There would be an introduction and a preface to demonstrate that the Board has a wide knowledge of the issues. The body of the report would be the three meetings. A lot of the background information would be drawn from the speakers. Ms. Koerner would like the Report to function as resource material, and use boxed text to set the context. The recommendations would appear in both the body of the Report and in the Recommendations at a Glance section, followed by the conclusion. The conclusion would contain the local input and the trends and hot spots in the border region. A separate section would have logistical information, the list of attendees, and a description of the public comments, including those comments not germane to the theme. Chairperson Espinosa added that the Board would generate letters of five actions per meeting, and be prepared for interim activities.

There were many comments from the Board, some of which are included here. Mr. Walling asked rhetorically, using the upcoming meeting as the example, what is the value-added that is to be gotten from this topic? Water has been discussed

previously and there is a lot of data related to the supply and quality of water, and it is not new to the Board's constituents (the Executive Branch). The issues haven't changed, the Board visits a community and raises expectations, and then there is no action. Perhaps the approach to take is to ask what the communities are doing, to promote the best practice to a broader audience, or formulate a recommendation. The Board might act as a venue of information about activities at the local level, which might be useful in the future to replicate in other communities.

Others agreed that these are good comments, but there is some value in just raising the issue more than once with the federal government, it was pointed out. The wastewater in Calexico (where the next meeting is being held, for example) is a binational problem that hasn't been addressed. The Board should continue to be a forum for communities to convey unaddressed concerns to the government. Chairperson Espinosa commented that the Board's goal should be doing a better job in bringing local situations to light. Another member advocated expanding the base of communications from the stakeholder groups to the government. The residents need to know that some result is going to come from their testimony before the Board.

Mr. Hardaker expressed concern about having too local a focus, and therefore losing stature as a federal Board. A member agreed, and said that it is important to use the sites and issues as examples of where the federal government needs to focus activities on the border. The Board is uniquely positioned to do that. Another added that many problems can be consistently wrapped up into common threads across state lines.

In addition to other comments, Mr. dos Santos approved of the suggested report format but urged flexibility in not being tied down to a theme just because a problem is the theme of a meeting. The Board needs the flexibility to address problems at a meeting that aren't pertinent to the site.

Ms. Koerner urged that at the beginning of each year, the major themes be chosen, rather than select themes as they arise. There will be even more work next year under the new format because the individual meetings will be covered in greater detail, plus other themes that come along. Ms. Sowell proposed creating a running list of topics that is refined annually from which several are chosen each year.

Ms. Kunz supported the new approach and asked to hear other Board members' thoughts on the issue. A number of Board members expressed their support but

with different twists—wanting to ensure that experts at the meeting location who are outside of the theme are not precluded from speaking to the Board; fearing that meetings with single themes will be diverted into other issues and there won't be enough material for the Report on the theme (and suggesting that each meeting have all three themes); lightening the research workload in forming a recommendation after a meeting by having the meeting committee prepare the speaker in advance on anticipated issues so that the speaker can act as an added resource; wanting flexibility on the issues and in organizing the report; and having the planning committee also be a follow-up committee to get back to community members after a meeting on the issues they raised.

Mr. Ranger wanted to ensure that, in addition to the annual report, the minutes of site visits are synthesized and published quickly so that they can be used at the local level. This allows the Board to serve as a catalyst in local communities rather than just raising expectations. Ms. Koerner responded that she could not take on that extra workload if he was talking about distribution of these interim reports. She already is working on comment letters, a monthly newsletter, the annual report, and with the planning committee on meetings. Perhaps the planning committee for each meeting could take that on or there is another creative solution or a shortened version of what Mr. Ranger proposes.

Dr. Cibas, as a new Board member, suggested that the Board look for adjustments to policies that will impact the environment when forming its recommendations, especially if an action by the federal government is inevitable and has some community support—rather than rejecting the action totally. There was a general consensus that the new format be used, while maintaining flexibility.

Board Member Report-Outs

At the outset of the discussion of the Calxico meeting Chairperson Espinosa reminded the Board to keep in mind a theme or focus, and that flexibility might be needed between now and the meeting. Ms. Koerner gave a brief rundown of the media stories that had appeared as a result of yesterday's press conference. The Board members reported on issues, meetings and activities of interest to others.

Ms. Sutley went over some hotel, transportation, and meeting facility logistics. She proposed water and/or energy as the theme and discussed some potential local speakers—elected officials; a college dean, a retired professor, and researchers; the regional water quality control board; a representative from the Imperial irrigation

district; the air pollution control officer/county agricultural commissioner; and people from Mexico such as the director of ecology for the city of Mexicali, and the director of the state commission on public works. She also suggested several stops for a field trip. Mr. Phillips volunteered to work with the planning committee to have representatives of the Cocopah Tribe in Mexico meet with the Board. A member of the Mexican NAC, BECC, and Consejo was suggested. Ms. Koerner thanked the planning committee for all of their work and mentioned that the regional EPA offices would like to be put on the agenda. Ms. Sutley added that Calexico is very isolated and she thinks there will be a lot of local interest, so she would like a sufficient amount of time scheduled for public comment. Chairperson Espinosa requested that community NGO groups from both sides be invited. Coordinating the transportation, who was interested in a tour, and the format of the meeting were discussed.

Report-Outs were given by the Board members and Andrea Abel on their activities and programs. Ms. Koerner thanked those who had sent news items and events for the calendar of the Round-Up, and encouraged more to do that. The Report-Outs were interrupted by the arrival of Betsy Henry.

Reporting to the President and Congress—Betsy Henry

Ms. Henry, of the EPA Office of Congressional Affairs, spoke about the logistics and other issues that Board members will face in their outreach visits to Capitol Hill tomorrow. She mentioned what it is like to speak to someone in a Congressional office and realize that they aren't passionate about the issue that is the reason for the visit. Ms. Henry has found that people were very open and accepting of information—the hard part is getting them to absorb it, act on it, or follow through. She advised the Board members to speak about the Report and the press it has gotten, and she complimented the Board on a “great-looking Report.” Ms. Henry answered questions about the members of the border-state delegations and the relevant committees and staff that the Board members are to target. She also suggested writing to the House and Senate members in their states' delegation as a way to get a written response.

Chairperson Espinosa asked for a show of hands of who is planning to go to the Hill, and requested the Board members to email her afterwards with a summary of who they were not able to visit and what had occurred. Ms. Koerner also wanted emails. Ms. Kunz asked how best to leverage meetings with groups like the Border Caucus and how to get the members or staff interested in meeting. The Board was already familiar with the difference in the ban on lobbying and going to the Hill to

disseminate information. The Board members going to the Hill spoke about who they hope to contact. Ms. Henry suggested they stop by the committee offices. Chairperson Espinosa asked Ms. Henry to let her know when any further information develops during the year.

Strategy for Dissemination of Fifth Report

Chairperson Espinosa began the discussion of dissemination of the Fifth Report. Out of 5,000 copies printed last year, Ms. Koerner reported, there are several hundred left. She ordered the same amount this year. Ms. Espinosa asked her to explain the distribution process to Congress and other officials. According to Ms. Koerner, the process is fairly ad hoc—a combination of Board members reaching Congress, a mailing list from Region 6, and the EPA legislative office distributing to key Congressional committees. She asked Board members to fill out a form specifying to whom Reports should be sent and whether the Board member should send it or have Ms. Koerner's office do it.

Chairperson Espinosa suggested taking copies to conferences to hand out. Ms. Rose mentioned that Mr. dos Santos had sent to an extensive list last year of people at the state level and Mexican municipal governments, universities, and federal agencies. She asked if there isn't a similar list for California, if Cal-EPA is doing the distributing, or if there are some guidelines. Chairperson Espinosa said that there are no guidelines. She suggested that the members send them to border mayors with a personal note, state libraries, have a website link to the Board site, trade associations, Congressional district offices, and state legislative and executive offices.

Ms. Koerner asked if Board members are willing to reach the same audiences this year, and to send her an email letting her know to which individuals and at what meetings the Report has been distributed so she can alert other members to avoid duplication. Ms. Chapman suggested having Ms. Koerner's office send the Report directly to conferences for dissemination by Board members. Ms. Koerner will need two weeks advance notice and will email if more than one member is attending the same meeting. Distribution to Mexican officials was discussed.

Traditionally there is a generic mailing to Congress with a letter from Governor Whitman (that is now in the approval process), and a more personalized distribution from Board members. There is no coordinated system for distribution. Ms. Koerner agreed to send the Report to those who attend public comment sessions. Mr. dos Santos sends a cover letter with his Reports that explains that the

Report is a product of the Board's consensus and that it does not reflect his agency's views. The text of his letter will be emailed to members. A Board member suggested emailing colleagues and asking those interested in a copy of the Report to respond. Another added that the government distributor has the capability of taking electronic lists and developing a database, and will forward the Report from that database. It can also distribute Reports with a cover letter if it is provided. She suggested taking information to border roundtables and open houses on how to obtain the Report through an 800 telephone number or online. Ms. Koerner wants to explore the possibility of using the regional offices' databases. Chairperson Espinosa mentioned putting news items on a web site or a link to download the Report.

Ms. Koerner is working to get an electronic copy on the website as soon as possible and will explore the possibility of making it available on CD-ROM. She suggested having a Board member with a lot of technology capability and one with limited technological resources to participate in the March conference call. Chairperson Espinosa advocated adapting the press release and sending it to local media outlets and editorial boards, especially in rural areas. Ms. Koerner suggested adapting the release on Board letterhead and sending it with members' cover notes.

Mr. Trevino cautioned that some individuals might not read the Report if it is sent in the wrong language. Ms. Kunz pointed out that the translation of Geraldo Monroy (phonetic) is not given recognition. Ms. Koerner will try to make up for the error and ensure that credit is given in the next Report. An addendum to the new Report, a notice on the web site or the Round-Up, or a letter were mentioned as possible outlets for recognition.

2002 Work Grid Discussion

As Ms. Koerner walked the Board members through the work plan grid, she asked for volunteers to work on the Juarez and Nogales meetings. She will reissue the grid at the next meeting with updated volunteer assignments. Volunteer positions include focusing on distribution of the Report in Mexico; monitoring the follow-up to the air, Hazmat, and water recommendations; the El Centro, Juarez, and Nogales meeting draft and recommendations; comment letters; liaison to Consejo and other outreach work; and creating evaluation criteria and accountability standards.

Ms. Kunz volunteered herself and three others on the Outreach Committee to assess the distribution of the Report to the President and Congress and its impact. Mr. Ranger said that within the technology discussions, there will be a look at the

distribution database issue (this was added under “Other Activities”). He will be the point person. Dr. Coronado volunteered for the Juarez meeting and the outreach to the Consejo, and she volunteered Mr. Ybarra to help with the Juarez meeting. Chairperson Espinosa suggested that the other New Mexico members volunteer for this meeting, as well. Dr. Cibas and Darrin Swartz-Larson and his staff are possibilities for that meeting. Mr. Trevino volunteered for Juarez. Board members Ranger, Kunz, dos Santos, Klein, Allen, and Coronado will work on the Nogales meeting.

Mr. Klein volunteered for the Fifth Report recommendations follow up. Chairperson Espinosa and Ms. Koerner agreed to hold off on a decision on retaining the same working groups. Ms. Koerner hopes that the Planning Committee will serve as a drafting work group for the three meetings. Another group may be formed later in the process. The Planning Committee will do not only the planning of the meeting, but some follow up and capturing of what is heard.

Mr. dos Santos asked Ms. Sowell if OIA could advise the Board about the progress of the various recommendations at each meeting, since OIA follows them anyway. Ms. Sowell agreed that it makes sense but does not want to make a commitment to do that without checking with Gregg Cooke. The question of monitoring the parts that her office usually doesn’t track is unresolved. Ms. Koerner added that perhaps other members could track air and Hazmat, since Mr. Klein also is doing that for water. Mr. dos Santos agreed to do what he could. Ms. Koerner expressed hope that other members of the committee will also forward this information.

In terms of the Sixth Report, Ms. Koerner asked if the Board is comfortable with the concept of the planning committee for each meeting. She will work on the report but does not want to take on the responsibility of drafting a follow up or summary of the meeting for the Report.

Chairperson Espinosa spoke about comment letters. There will soon be an attempt to make some kind of decision on the BECC and NADBank. If there is a decision the Board may want to communicate by email to determine if it wants to comment prior to the Calxico meeting. Ms. Koerner thought that the responsibility on the comment letters can evolve throughout the year, depending on individual interest in the issue.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

GOOD NEIGHBOR ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD
2002 Strategic Planning Session

Meeting Summary
January 24, 2002

Omni Shoreham Hotel
2500 Calvert Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Participants.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Meeting Focus.....	4
Panel I - Federal Representatives.....	4
Department of Interior.....	4
U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Resources Conservation Service.....	5
Department of Energy.....	6
International Boundary and Water Commission.....	7
U.S. Department of State.....	7
Questions and Answers for Panel I.....	9
Department of Energy.....	9
Department of State.....	9
Keynote Presentation - What Is the Vision for the Next Border Program?.....	10
Panel II - Public/Private Sector Experts.....	11
U.S.-Mexico Border Caucus.....	11
Non-governmental Sector - National Wildlife Federation.....	12
U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce.....	12
BECC/NADBank.....	13
Southwest Center for Environmental Research and Policy.....	14
Questions and Answers for Panel II.....	14
BECC/NADBank.....	14
Public Comment Session.....	15
Substantive Issues.....	15
Revisit of Road Map.....	15

**Good Neighbor Environmental Board
2002 Strategic Planning Session
Part II: Border Forecast 2002**

List of Meeting Participants for January 24, 2002

Board Members:

Judith M. Espinosa, Chair, Director, ART Institute, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
Susan Kunz, Acting Chair, Tucson, AZ

Non-Governmental, State, Local, Tribal Members:

Larry Allen, Board of Directors, Malapai Borderlands Group, Oro Valley, AZ
Diana Borja, Director, Border Affairs, Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission,
Austin, TX
Karen M. Chapman, Texas Center for Policy Studies, Austin, TX
Gedi Cibas, Ph.D. Manager, Border Programs, New Mexico Environmental Department,
Sante Fe, NM
Irasema Coronado, Ph.D., Dept. of Political Science, University of Texas - El Paso, El Paso, TX
Placido dos Santos, Border Environmental Manager, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality,
Tucson, AZ
William G. Fry, Vice President, Quality Assurance & Environmental Affairs, H-E-B Grocery
Company, San Antonio, TX
Jennifer L. Kraus, Principal, Global Environmental Consulting Company, San Diego, CA
Dale Phillips, Vice Chair, Cocopah Tribe, Somerton, AZ
Ed Ranger, President, LexRader, Inc., Tempe, AZ
Diane Rose, Mayor, City of Imperial Beach, Imperial Beach, CA
Nancy H. Sutley, Deputy Secretary, Policy and Intergovernmental Relations, California
Environmental Protection Agency, Sacramento, CA

Federal Members:

John Klein, Assistant Regional Hydrologist, U.S. Geological Survey, Sacramento, CA
Dennis Linskey, Office of Mexico Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC
Sarah Sowell, (substituting for Gregg Cooke), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Dallas, TX
Rosendo Trevino, III, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S.
Department of Agriculture, Albuquerque, NM

EPA Support Team:

Elaine M. Koerner, Designated Federal Officer, Office of Cooperative Environmental Management
(OCEM), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC
Geraldine Brown, Staff Member, OCEM, Washington, DC
Lois Williams, Staff Member, OCEM, Washington, DC

Resource Specialist:

Roberto Ybarra, International Boundary and Water Commission, El Paso, TX

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
GOOD NEIGHBOR ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD
2002 Strategic Planning Session

Meeting Summary
January 24, 2002

Omni Shoreham Hotel
2500 Calvert Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Meeting Summary

Introduction:

The Board is a diverse group, with representatives from federal agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), state and local agencies and groups, and tribal communities. Representing the ten states bordering Mexico, the Board also includes representatives from Washington, D.C. The Board's diversity encompasses rural, and urban areas, with both varying, and common local concerns, and priorities.

Chair Espinosa began the meeting at 8:12 a.m.

Meeting Focus - 2002 Forecast:

In keeping with the previous day's proceedings and theme, the second day's session concentrated on the border forecast for 2002, and, particularly, the Good Neighbor Environmental Board's (the Board's) role in providing assistance with problem solving. The Board heard from two panels, regarding issues of concern to the border region: 1.) Federal Agency Representatives, and 2.) Public/Private Sector Experts. Additionally, the keynote presentation, entitled "What Is the Vision for the Next Border Program?" featured two speakers, one with a federal viewpoint, and the other with a state perspective. These discussions are highlighted below.

Panel I: Federal Agency Representatives:

For ease in referencing each entity represented, this summary will identify, and highlight each agency's comments. The cumulative points that surface will appear in the "Substantive Issues" section of the summary, after both Panel sections, and the keynote presentation section (page 15).

After introductions of those in attendance, Kathryn Washburn, from the Department of the Interior began the presentations.

Department of the Interior:

Since the Department of the Interior (DOI) is better known for its different bureaus, Kathryn Washburn

described the various bureaus dealing with the border region, including: the U.S. Geological Survey, concerned with water, geology, mapping, and biodiversity; the Bureau of Reclamation, concerned with water supply and dams; the Bureau of Indian Affairs, dealing with issues involving American Indians and Alaska Natives; the Minerals Management Service, responsible for offshore oil and gas leasing; the Bureau of Land Management, managing resources on the considerable amount of land along the border, and the rest of the western states; and the National Park Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service, managing parks, and refuges along the border, and various other projects. Only one bureau is not actively involved along the Mexican-U.S. border.

All DOI's bureaus focus on specific projects. More than 150 projects with U.S. Mexican counterparts range in dollar figures from \$40,000 to \$.5 million. Generally, DOI does not conduct planning projects, and generates few reports. Approximately seven years ago, DOI established the Field Coordinating Committee, consisting of representatives from all the bureaus mentioned above, who meet twice a year, to coordinate activities along the border. The committee's goal is to promote synergy, limiting duplicated efforts, in projects dealing with border-region issues.

Currently, the Field Coordinating Committee is planning its annual meeting, a major organizing event, scheduled for spring, 2002. Involving both DOI Secretary, Gail Norton, and the Mexican Minister of the Environmental and Natural Resources Secretary (SEMARNAT), Victor Lichtinger, the annual meeting will include panels discussing water issues, and parks.

Ms. Washburn stated that DOI will continue to emphasize specific projects, and work directly with their Mexican counterparts on mutual interests, as apposed to becoming involved with the border planning process.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Resources Conservation Service:

Joan Comanor spoke about the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), as being focused on private land conservation, with a delivery system at the field level. NRCS typically operates by monitoring, and measuring conditions, and trends in natural resources. Ms. Comanor reiterated that the issues and challenges along the border region have been clearly identified, and include: water quality, and quantity; deteriorating/decreasing grasslands, grazing lands, and wildlife habitat; soil erosion, and sedimentation; impacts of rapid population growth; inadequate, and deteriorating infrastructure; etc.

The challenge facing NRCS remains how to sustain sufficient, financial, and human resources to assist with the issues currently identified. Mentioning another stumbling block to reaching this goal, Ms. Comanor emphasized not losing sight of the compelling need for each country's population to achieve a living wage, and a trained, skilled workforce. Economic issues cannot remain outside the purview of conservation concerns. Nearly all, of the conservation financial assistance programs administered by NRCS, require that a portion of the cost be provided by the landowner or community. These can reach as high as 25, and 50 percent, but in areas of extreme poverty, an enormous barrier remains, to participating in these programs.

Ms. Comanor highlighted three major areas NRCS will focus its attention in 2002:

1. Assist rural border communities in expanding their capabilities to plan for, and respond to, population growth, and other land use issues.
 - A. Assist local communities achieve their land management objectives in environmentally sound ways.
 - B. Provide information and technical assistance to local officials, and landowners, regarding potential outcomes of their land use decisions.
 - C. Provide flexible financial incentives to help procure sound conservation practices, both applied, and maintained.
2. Increase NRCS' proactive response in assisting, and working with local entities already formed, around border issues and concerns.
 - A. Increase partnership opportunities.
 - B. As an example, 12 new areas, from the new entity, the U.S.-Mexico Border Coalition of Resource Conservation and Development, currently exist along the border. As multi-county areas, they function with volunteer, local, elected, and civic leaders as non-profit organizations. They formed this coalition to work collectively on shared issues.
3. Reauthorizing Farm Bill legislation, affecting conservation.
 - A. Maintain a close eye on this legislation, as it progresses through Congress.
 - B. Decide whether, or not, the Board wants to influence this legislation.

Ms. Comanor invited the Board to assist NRCS, by strengthening partnerships that assist local entities find solutions to their issues, and concerns.

Department of Energy:

Representing the Department of Energy (DOE), a complex agency, including more than 30 national laboratories, George Person described the Office of Policy and International Affairs, as responsible for coordinating international activities, across DOE. Since energy is an important issue to the border region, DOE understands its role in trying to balance energy development, with the associated environmental considerations, and international affairs. DOE sustains comprehensive cooperation with Mexico, dating back more than 20 years. Policy consultations, on a broad array of issues, include: a formal Energy Working Group, under the Binational Commission; and formal bilateral relationships, through which comprehensive science and technology issues can cover four major areas: renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean fuel technology, and general information exchange.

In developing a North American energy picture, leaders of all three nations hope to develop a common view, emphasizing: energy demand/energy supply, existing infrastructure, and energy needs for the future. Current DOE key activities focus on these two major areas:

1. Promoting clean energy technologies, including natural gas, emphasizing environmental issues associated with energy utilization, and development.
 - A. DOE's Clean Cities Program, involving 21 U.S. cities, and several Mexican cities, focuses on alternative fuels for light duty vehicles, with the international aspect, reviewing medium

- and heavy duty vehicles, and truck crossings at the borders that emit heavy pollution.
- B. DOE's trilateral partnership through the North American Energy Working Group, partners: Canada, the United States, and Mexico, leading towards building a seamless North American market.
- 2. Promoting energy efficiency, in which less energy used, equals less pollution.
 - A. Supported by the Summit of America's Process in 1994, in Miami, the Hemisphere of Energy Initiative (HEI), has two key elements, dealing with efficient energy: Action Item 12, energy cooperation, and Action Item 21, partnership for sustainable energy use.
 - B. DOE will sponsor a regulatory conference in March, in Miami, highlighting changes in electricity restructuring in Mexico.

International Boundary and Water Commission:

Speaking for the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), Mr. Ybarra described this commission as truly binational, equally split between the United States and Mexico. Respecting, and upholding treaties dating back to 1889, 1906, 1944, and 1970, IBWC is an international organization that partners with other agencies, and local governments to conduct its responsibilities. IBWC provides leadership, for preventing, and solving problems, arising from implementing various boundary, and water treaties, still in place.

Those responsibilities include: boundary preservation; boundary demarcation on the land; control of international waters - flood control utilization, through the construction, operation, and maintenance of international dams; and water quality, and sanitation. Accomplished mostly, through joint engineering action, IBWC remains mindful of balancing water supply for human needs, domestic, and agricultural; and nature's needs, flora, and fauna.

IBWC's large issues involve the two river systems: the Colorado River, and the Rio Grande system. Even though the Colorado River has only approximately 24 miles of international boundary, it remains a huge river system. Its main issue centers on the over appropriation of its water system. The Rio Grande has 1,200 miles of river boundary. In accordance with the treaties, and executive agreements, called "Minutes of the IBWC," IBWC administers the water deliveries, and water quality in those deliveries.

Two important agreements exist: Minute 306 for the Colorado River, studies dealing with the river's ecology; and Minute 306 for the Rio Grande, intent to provide a short-, mid-, and long-term approach in applying the '44 treaty, concerning waters delivered by Mexico to the U.S. Water debts accumulate, and IBWC studies the technical side to propose solutions. Building partnerships to find future solutions, IBWC works with other agencies; NGOs; local areas, dealing with watershed issues; and general information, on the watershed.

IBWC sees the need for a comprehensive study, identifying waters that are not appropriated. These include waters, and streams that cross the boundary, with a hydrological connection with groundwaters, and/or locations partially in one country, and partially in the other. For purposes of inventory, IBWC would like to identify priority basins, then develop future plans to best utilize these basins.

U.S. Department of State:

Dennis Linskey, Director, Office of Mexican Affairs, with the U.S. Department of State, outlined the overall political climate between the United States and Mexico, highlighting major events in U.S.-Mexico relations for the coming year. He emphasized that internationally, neighboring countries enjoy relationships different than other international relationships. As seen by all the projects, and programs reported here, the U.S. and Mexico share many common interests, and issues.

Both presidents exchanged unique visits, and President Bush categorized Mexico, as our most important foreign policy priority. A shift occurred only after the September 11th attacks. Recently moving back toward a more normal state, Mexico returns, again, as a country receiving executive level attention. Also, Mexico is modernizing rapidly, bringing a new set of concerns from both countries.

The State Department is defining a new agenda. Homeland security will become a priority issue, which will involve both Mexico, and Canada. Because of a shift in our resources toward counter terrorism, resources will decrease for many programs, and most agencies. Best estimates are that Mexico, necessarily, will follow in this resource shift.

Mexico's political structure has changed from a one party domination, to a multi-party state. Their devolution of authority increases the power of their governors, and possibly mayors. U.S. congressional makeup means both countries' legislative processes become more important, concerning specific issues.

The United Nations Conference on International Financial Development took place, February 18th through 22nd, and President Bush may travel to Mexico in the fall, to attend the annual Asian Pacific Economic Conference. These meetings represent chances to discuss the entire range of issues, relating to the U.S.-Mexico agenda. Currently, President Bush is deliberating about the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC), and the North American Development Bank (NADBank) reform.

Water, and water debt remain important issues, also. Differing views exist, regarding the '44 water treaty sufficient waters, which are not easily disentangled from long-term policy decisions. These differences emphasize the need for future planning, most logically through the seven working groups, each led by a cabinet secretary. The Working Group on Environmental Issues, headed by EPA Administrator Whitman, acts as a forum for open dialogs, and problem solving.

Also, still at the forefront, air pollution demands a high level of attention, especially in view of new statistics linking it to increased asthma, and other significant health problems.

Questions and Answers for Panel I¹:

Department of Energy:

DOE works closely with the Secretary for Energy in Mexico, the Energy Efficiency Agency, and CONAE. The Secretary of Energy, in turn, coordinates with regulatory bodies, and PIM-Mex, but DOE has some laboratories working directly with institutions in Mexico.

DOE has no role in planning, nor monitoring power plants, in other countries. DOE has responsibility for the formal presidential permit processes for those plants requiring cross-border connections to the U.S., especially electricity transmission lines. The process requires a *Federal Register* notice that an application has been filed. The answer went into further detail, but any interested member should refer to Anthony Comos, from the Office of Policy and International Affairs.

Nuclear power is an option, to which presidents of both countries remain open. Waste management, and ensuing advances in nuclear technology issues, raise important concerns for both countries.

Even though the Bush Administration refused the Kyoto Protocol, conservation remains an important issue. The new administration has looked at alternatives to Kyoto, making it clear that a technology-based approach is the path forward, from the U.S. perspective; and may make an announcement soon, about alternatives.

The process, for the North American Energy Working Group, related to supply and demand, and the environment, includes EPA, and the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Recommendations in GNEB's Fifth Report, for a formalized binational coordination, and cooperative planning process, involving U.S. and Mexican environmental, and energy agencies; and promotion of energy conservation, and alternative sources of energy, describe any existing venues.

Mr. Person stated that DOE has a long-standing bilateral relationship with the Secretary of Energy in Mexico, covering energy efficiency, and renewable energy issues. Also, EPA has a similar mechanism, and will provide follow up.

Department of State:

Mexico created the Office of the Commissioner for Northern Border Affairs, and the U.S. has a different philosophy, under the Bush Administration. Clinton created a number of high-level appointees to oversee issues that could expand several federal agencies. President Bush abolished them, viewing them as ineffective. Not reporting to Congress, having no budget oversight, generally unable to deliver on commitments, and dealing with the difficulties in relating federal official to state governors, etc., translated

¹ Most statements are responses to questions, without the written question. In most cases, responses restate the question, saving space.

into many problems with little benefit.

Ambassador Zeckley negotiates for Mexico, on the water debt situation. Currently there is not a U.S. counterpart. The crux of the matter involves interpreting the water treaty of 1944. The issue must be discussed between the two nations' presidents.

Keynote Presentation - What Is the Vision for the Next Border Program?

Jerry Clifford, EPA, Office of International Activities, welcomed new Board members, and stated that EPA released a progress report, focusing on the state of the environment along the border, and the status of the work on important border-region issues, especially on the water infrastructure. Lauding the Board's and EPA's work on border issues, as a model for sustainable government, and public/private partnership; and community involvement, Mr. Clifford reinforced the Bush Administration's commitment to border-region issues. Able to obtain an extra million dollars for the Board's 2002 work, most, committed to the regional offices, will further the regionalization or decentralization efforts.

Anticipating the issues to remain constant, including: water, and air pollution; hazardous wastes, and hazardous materials transport, back and forth across the borders; solid waste issues; emerging energy issues; and relationship between energy, along the border, and the environment, Mr. Clifford asked for the Board's support, and input, in working on these difficult issues. The Board's new challenge is to assist in establishing trust between the states, and the federal government, and to greatly increase public participation, and involvement of local communities, and citizens. Included in those efforts will be facilitating regions, and working much more closely with communities, to identify priorities most meaningful to each locality.

Also, focusing on expanding the BECC/NADBank to finance additional projects, Mr. Clifford mentioned receiving approximately 40 responses, with ideas for pilot projects. Chair Espinosa reported that the Board sent a response letter. Mr. Clifford asked the Board to consider identifying projects that EPA should consider, and encouraged the Board to continue working with Consejo.

Mr. Clifford mentioned that Regions VI and IX had scheduled meetings with their states, to discuss implementing regionalization, and added that headquarters will follow up with additional meetings involving these regions. Mexico also held a meeting to discuss these issues. EPA expects to have a large March meeting with SEMARNAT, and representatives from the 10 border states. Reiterating the goal of a "seamless border," Mr. Clifford ended with a plea for collaborative communication.

Interrupting Placido dos Santos' continuation of the keynote presentation, Chair Espinosa turned the meeting over to Acting Chair, Susan Kunz. This was Ms. Espinosa's last meeting as Chair, and Mr. Trevino on the Board's behalf, led the members in a standing ovation for her dedicated efforts. Ms. Koerner added her sincere thanks, and appreciation for a wonderful job.

Mr. dos Santos continued, reiterating that the 10 border states, EPA, and SEMARNAT engaged in

shaping a concept for the next Border Environmental Program. The Board's Fourth Report, written in December 1999, which included the assessment of the Border XXI Program, recommended that the next program needed to focus on regionalization. The program goal for the Border XXI Program was to promote sustainable development. The new goal is to protect the environmental, and public health in the U.S.-Mexico border region, consistent with the principle of sustainable development.

Mr. dos Santos presented some slides, illustrating the change in the Border XXI Program's organizational structure, from nine working groups, to a regional structure, with as much local leadership, and participation, as possible. Task forces will undertake actual work activities, allowing an open process for stakeholders to lead groups, and activities. Any border-wide issue not falling neatly into this new regional structure, would continue with the two federal governments, taking the lead, utilizing additional task forces, under them.

Not presuming to know how Tribes want representation, Mr. dos Santos suggested they may prefer having a sixth working group, for Tribal leaders. Giving examples, Mr. dos Santos presented this structure as flexible enough to accommodate everyone, evolving, as needed. Additional local participation will necessitate more resources spent in simultaneous translations.

Enlisting the Board's support for this structure, which will begin to prioritize local needs, Mr. dos Santos ended, by stating that since there are many more issues, than resources to cover them, the Board can assist in this prioritization process.

Asked how the funding would work in this structure, Mr. dos Santos replied that the funding is going to follow the development of the community plans. Ms. Koerner stated that Jerry Clifford might have a more detailed answer, but added that he had left the meeting. Additional questions were raised regarding copies of the handouts.

Panel II - Public/Private Sector Experts:

U.S.-Mexico Border Caucus:

Presenting an overview of the border region, Mr. Philip LoPicollo, from Congressman Reyes' office, began by listing parameters of the border region. The U.S.-Mexican border area consists of a 200-kilometer zone, extending 100 kilometers (62.5 miles) on either side of the border. Thirty-nine Mexican municipalities, 25 U.S. counties, and 14 pairs of sister cities make up the international boundary line.

Over the years, unsustainable practices have resulted in degradation of environmental conditions. Industrialization has brought important economic benefits, but not without cost to the environment, and public health. Paying a huge price for economic benefits associated with NAFTA, the border region remains plagued with serious public health problems, associated with toxic environmental exposure; contamination of air, water, and soil, by hazardous materials, and waste; pesticides; nitrates; raw sewage; untreated wastewater; and parasites, and bacteria.

Mr. LoPicollo cited statistics showing higher rates of specific diseases, such as tuberculosis, measles, rubella, dengue fever, diabetes, and others, in Congressman Reyes' district of El Paso, Texas. Like many other border communities, El Paso remains medically under served. With long lines between the ports of entry between the two countries, the bridges serving El Paso may have more than 50,000 vehicles every day, creating dangerous carbon monoxide poisoning. Solutions can include creating more ports of entry, and re-engineering the bridges.

Other concerns center around the colonias, which are the impoverished communities along the border. With no paved roads, a lack of running water, no electricity, nor sewer systems, they are approximately 1,500 strong, accounting for approximately .5 million people, 85 percent of whom are U.S. citizens.

Mr. LoPicollo also brought up the issue of civil rights, in discussing the rights of Hispanic farmers across the country, who allege discriminatory lending practices by the USDA, and the Farm Services Agency (FSA).

Finding solutions to promote sustainable development, by seeking a balance among social, and economic factions, and protecting the environment in border communities, should be a challenge for the Board.

Non-governmental Sector - National Wildlife Federation:

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) is the nation's largest conservation, education and advocacy organization, with more than four million members, and nine original field offices, including ones in Austin, Texas, and San Diego, California. Speaking for the NWF, Andrea Abel stated its motto: People in nature, the future is in the balance. Asking the Board to remember that environmental degradation has an impact on wildlife, human health, and the livelihood of border residents.

Issues important to NWF include: BECC/NADBank, water, the Rio Grande, the Colorado River Delta, Sonoran Desert, and the Chihuahuan Desert. Ms. Abel informed the Board that they have a key role to play in the future of border planning, especially in building meaningful public participation, and ensuring that NGO participation takes place throughout the planning process, and not just as an afterthought, at the end of the process.

U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce:

Selected as one of the seven private sector delegates, for the Partnership for Prosperity, that Presidents Bush and Fox promulgated in early September, this group hopes to share its ideas, and enthusiasm in the year to come. Using e-commerce to move information back and forth, opens this region's small businesses to many opportunities they may have missed, otherwise. Taping into universities and other partners, they have moved into a relationship with the Department of Defense, to assist in promoting, and connecting procurement avenues.

Possibilities also exist for energy partnerships through the Department of Labor. The Department of Commerce ITA granted them a cooperative grant to set up the first bilingual, U.S.-English database, of

Mexican environmental laws.

Looking forward to continuing their work with the Board, several cooperative programs with EPA include:

1. Seven principles of environmental stewardship, focusing on stakeholder issues;
2. Wiring the border, providing hard-to-reach information nets to three locations: Imperial County, California, Arizona, and the Tohono O'odham Nation, and the Ayuda Project outside of El Paso, Texas;
3. Health and safety programs, including a joint alliance with the National Safety Council.

BECC/NADBank:

Substituting for Marico Sayoc, Dennis Linskey spoke to the Board about raising its awareness of the process of the NADBank, and BECC's mandated changes, and how they can help implement Board recommendations. Falling into two categories, these changes include: a geographical expansion further into Mexico, and additional areas in which monies could become available.

Providing background information about how the institutions began, Mr. Linskey reported that they deal with environmental infrastructure needs, in the U.S.-Mexico border region. BECC has two major responsibilities: provide technical assistance for the development of environmental infrastructure projects, along the U.S.-Mexican border; and certify these projects, once they comply with preestablished criteria, in order to have financing, under the NADBank.

The changes in the charter expand the mandate to include industrial hazardous waste, but only to the extent these wastes threaten water, or soil. Water conservation, along with water, and wastewater hookups for housing, recycling projects, and waste reduction, will become increasingly important issues for BECC activities.

Requesting input from government agencies, NGOs, and academia, BECC/NADBank received 40 responses for potential pilot projects. The Board can assist, in 2002, by suggesting methods utilizing the new mandate expansion. Currently the BECC is working on 94 additional projects on traditional sectors of water, wastewater and solid waste. BECC's challenge includes expediently developing these 94 projects, while identifying criteria, and building expertise for the new projects, under the mandate expansion.

Scott Stormant, Senior Program Development Officer, NADBank, gave a brief overview of NADBank's activities. Highlights include: 45 project sponsors, requesting funding; and funding commitments, through allocations from the Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF), to 41 projects at \$354 million, nine loans, totaling \$25 million, and 35 projects, receiving \$330 million in BEIF grant funds. Additional activities coordinated with other agencies, involve institutional programs dealing with capacity building. Targeting community development, 99 technical assistance projects exist in 64 communities; and the Utility Management Institute provides 148 utility professionals from 57 communities, in the U.S. and Mexico, to train participants in four-module, managerial components.

The Board can assist with suggestions that could increase NADBank's performance in the core, mandated sectors: such as, how to improve the coordination between the BECC and NADBank, at the project level, as well as, at the board level. On the primary sectors, under the mandate expansion, recycling; water conservation; industrial hazardous waste; site remediation; clean, and efficient energy; air quality; and transportation projects have been approved. Also, NADBank must focus on business development with project sponsors, private and public; expand its resources, through additional partnerships; and reduce/condense administrative costs.

Other major issues brought forward included: pollution prevention and energy efficiency, through renewable energy projects; recycling solid waste, such as tires; and air quality, relating to road paving.

Southwest Center for Environmental Research and Policy

The Southwest Center for Environmental Research and Policy (SCERP) is a five-university consortium of southwestern universities, with four Mexican partner universities. SCERP receives congressional funding, through EPA's budget appropriations. Paul Rasmussen, SCERP Project Officer, reports that SCERP conducts applied research, and will hold a policy conference, on water, in Rio Rico, Arizona, this spring. SCERP conducts outreach programs, as well.

Mr. Rasmussen urged the Board to look at long-range planning, when discussing their 2002 planning process. Sustainable development is not a short-sighted goal, and SCERP foresees success for that process, using a 20 year time frame. Systemic problems result in many issues, receiving attention here today, including: population increases, doubling, from 13 million, to approximately 25 million in 20 years; low incomes in both countries; industrialization; and new security issues.

Mr. Rasmussen made these specific recommendations to the Board: 1.) Develop industrial ecologies within clusters; 2.) Publish a state of the border, and develop an indicator system; 3.) Designate common air sheds; 4.) Allow emissions, permits, and renewable energy credits trading; 5.) Assess, and notify jurisdictions of trans-boundary impacts; 6.) Inform, and engage NGOs in the private sector; 7.) Continue to do research; and 8.) Develop a joint policy process, both short- and long-term, leading to implementing a border institute.

Questions and Answers for Panel II²:

BECC/NADBank:

Mr. Stormant elaborated on the information infrastructure, by adding that traditionally, NADBank provided hardware, and software for border utilities, including water utilities, through building systems, and computers. NADBank is exploring the infrastructure base, for line surveys, and mapping capabilities, so that communities could feed into a GIS database. Previously, Mr. Stormant discussed the information

² Please see footnote from page 8.

infrastructure, as a growing edge, in the UMI training module.

Re-chartering the BECC/NADBank site agreements to NAFTA, can only come from congressional action. Any changes must be enacted into law in both countries, so advising, through a common set of recommendations that the executive branches of both governments would send to their congresses, avoids the longer route.

Discussion digressed into several references which were not decipherable. Questions were suspended for the public comments, but continue here, for continuity.

A member voiced concern about nuclear power plants on either side of the border, and asked that the Board discuss that at a later time.

Public Comment Session:

Created under the Environmental Site Agreement to NAFTA, the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) advises EPA's administrator, in her capacity as representative to the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, which is composed of the environmental ministers of Mexico, United States, and Canada. Representing GAC, Denise Ferguson-Southard reports that this committee is identifying other sister advisory committees, with overlapping missions, to provide opportunities to partner, and better leverage shared work interests. Offering to assist the Board in identifying those opportunities, Ms. Ferguson-Southard mentioned developing a continent-wide system to track hazardous waste, and possible hazardous materials.

Ms. Kunz, Acting Chair will extend the offer of assistance to the Chair.

Substantive Issues:

All groups agreed on the long list of basic issues, including: water quality, and quantity; air pollution; deteriorating/decreasing grasslands, grazing lands, and wildlife habitat; soil erosion, and sedimentation; impacts of rapid population growth; inadequate, and deteriorating infrastructure; cleaner, and more efficient energy; sustainable economic development; hazardous wastes, and hazardous wastes transport; solid wastes, and wastewater removal/disposal; and homeland security. However, they differed on how to prioritize this list, and asked for the Board's assistance with this task.

In promoting solutions, and planning methods to arrive at solutions, the groups represented agreed with the common premise to increase community involvement, and foster additional partnerships, with others struggling to find solutions to these same concerns. Most view the Board's new challenge, as assisting in establishing trust between the states, the federal government, and Tribes, and to greatly increase public participation, involving local communities, and citizens. Listening to, respecting, and incorporating the list of priorities brought forward from local communities, also remains a challenge.

Extending the limited resources available to develop solutions to these problems, consistently appears as

the greatest challenge for the Board. With never enough resources to resolve all border-region issues, the Board's work for 2002 exists with the task of prioritizing, and efficiently utilizing available resources to accomplish the greatest possible benefit for the border region.

Revisit of the Road Map:

Elaine Koerner stated that she and Judith Espinosa will construct a draft list, including vision goals, and activities, capturing the essence of issues discussed today. Several members appreciated comments from the presenters, including those discussing broadening community involvement, and participation, and increasing opportunities for promoting leadership, and breaking down barriers to recognition, especially in the Indian world, along the border in Mexico.

In beginning this meeting by launching the Fifth Report, Ms. Koerner stated that she believed it was well received, and mentioned being pleased about the press coverage. Restating leadership and capacity-building, as a potential theme, she thanked the Board members for their volunteer efforts.

Ms. Kunz, Acting Chair, adjourned the meeting at 12:25 p.m.